

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 4.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराशिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

VOL. XXI]

OCTOBER 1916

[No. 243

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

(V.—Continued from page 163.)

[Place : *The Kali-temple at Dakshineswar and the Alambazar Math. Year : 1897, March.*

Subject : *The utility of feasts and festivities in the realm of religion.—Different grades of religious practice and observance are justified by different degrees of competence in men.—The object of Swamiji's preaching of religion, not the formation of a new sect.]*

After 3 P. M. Swamiji said to the disciple, "Fetch me a cab, please ; I must go to the Math now." The disciple brought one accordingly with two annas for its fare for going up to Alambazar. Swamiji himself sat on one side and asked Swami Niranjanananda and the disciple to sit on the other and we drove happily towards the Alambazar Math. On the way, Swamiji said to the disciple, "It won't do, you see, to live on abstract ideas merely? These festivals and the like are also necessary ; for then only, these ideas would spread gradually among the masses. You see, the Hindus have proverbially got their thirteen festivals in twelve months ; and the secret of it is to infuse the larger ideals of religion gradually into the minds of the people. It has also its drawback, though. For people in general missing their inner significance become so much engrossed in

externals that no sooner these festivities cease than they become their old selves again. Hence, it is true that all these form the outer covering of religion causing real spirituality and self-knowledge to remain rather hidden.

"But there are those who cannot at all understand in the abstract what 'religion' is or what the 'Self' is, and they try to realise spirituality gradually through these festivals and ceremonies. Just take this Thakur's birth-day festival celebrated to-day ; those that attended it will at least once think of Thakur. The thought will occur to their mind as to who was he in whose name such a great crowd assembled and why did so many people come at all in his name. And those even that will come once in a year to see all the dancing and singing with the name of the Lord, or at least to partake of His food-offerings, they also will have a look at the

devotees of Thakur. From this will accrue not any harm but rather some benefit to them.

Disciple— But Sir, suppose somebody thinks these festivals and ceremonies to be the only thing essential, can he possibly advance any further? It will gradually come to be of as much stale and commonplace observance as those worships in our country of *Shasti*, *Mangal-chandi* and the like. People are everyday found to observe these rites till the end of the chapter, but where do we find even one among them rising through such observances to the knowledge of Brahman?

Swamiji— Why? In India so many spiritual heroes were born and didn't they have to make them the means of scaling the heights of greatness? When by persevering in practice through these props they gained a vision of the Self they lost all keenness about them. Yet, for the preservation of social economy, even great men of the type of incarnations follow these observances.

Disciple— Yes, for show only they may observe these. But when to a knower of self even this world itself becomes unreal like magic is it possible for him to recognise these external observances as true?

Swamiji— Why not possible? What we mean by truth, is not *that* also relative, varying in relation to time, place and person? Hence all observances have their utility, relatively to the varying qualifications in men. It is just as Thakur used to say that the mother cooks *Polão*, *Kôlia* (rich dishes) for one son, and sago for another.

Now the disciple understood at last and kept quiet. Meanwhile the carriage arrived at the Alambazar Math. The disciple paid off its fare and followed Swamiji into the Math where Swamiji, being thirsty, was brought some water by the former. After the drink, Swamiji put off his coat, and rested recumbent on the blanket spread on the floor. Swami Niranjananda, seated by his side, said, "We never had such a great

crowd in any year's Utsab before! As if whole Calcutta came crushing down!"

Swamiji— Little wonder; stranger things will happen hereafter.

Disciple— Sir, in every religious sect are found to exist external festivals of some kind or other. But there is no amity between one sect and another in this matter. Even in the case of such a liberal religion as that of Mahammad, I have found in Dacca that *Shias* and *Sunnis* go to loggerheads with each other.

Swamiji— That is incidental more or less everywhere you have sects. But do you know what the ruling sentiment here amongst us is?—non-sectarianism. Our Thakur was born to point that out. He would accept all forms but would say withal that when looked at from the standpoint of the knowledge of Brahman, they are only like illusory Maya.

Disciple— Sir, I can't understand your point. Sometimes it seems to me that by thus promulgating and celebrating these festivals you are also inaugurating another sect round the name of Thakur. I have heard it from the lips of Nág Mahashoy that Thakur did not belong to any sect. He used to pay great respects to all creeds such as the Shaktas, the Vaishnavas, the Brahmos, the Mahammedans and the Christians.

Swamiji— How do you know that we do not also hold in as great esteem all the religious creeds?

So saying, Swamiji called out in evident amusement to Swami Niranjan Maharaj: "Only think! what is this Bangal* saying!"

Disciple— Kindly make me understand, Sir, what you mean.

Swamiji— Well, you have, to be sure, read my lectures. But where have I built on Thakur's name? It is only the pure Upani-

* This term as used of people hailing from East Bengal is too often supposed to have a ring of derision. But in the case of the disciple, it very easily and naturally grew to be a term of peculiar endearment.—Ed. P. B.

shadic religion that I have gone about preaching in the world.

Disciple— That's true, indeed. But what I find by being familiar with you is that you are surrendered, body and soul, to devotion for Ramakrishna. If you have understood Thakur to be the Lord Himself, why not give it out to all people at large?

Swamiji— Well, I do preach just what I have understood. And if you have found in the Advaitic principles of Vedanta the truest religion according to yourself, then why don't you go out and preach it to all men?

Disciple— But then I must realise, before I can preach to others. I have only studied Advaitism in books.

Swamiji— Good; realise first and then preach. Now, therefore, you have no right to say anything of the beliefs each man tries to live by. For you also proceed now only by putting your faith on some such beliefs.

Disciple— True, I am also living now by believing in something; but I have the Shastra (scriptural revelation) for my authority. I do not accept any faith opposed to Shastra.

Swamiji— What do you mean by Shastra?

If the Upanishad is authority, why not the Bible or the Zendavesta exactly so?

Disciple— Granted these scriptures are good authority, they are not, however, as old as the Vedas. And nowhere, moreover, is the theory of the Atman better established, than in the Vedas.

Swamiji— Supposing I admit that contention of yours, what right have you to maintain that truth can be found nowhere except the in Vedas?

Disciple— Yes, truth may also be found to exist in all the scriptures other than the Vedas, and I don't say anything contrary to that. But as for me, I choose to abide in life by the teachings of the Upanishad, for it is in them that I have abundance of faith.

Swamiji— Quite welcome to do that, but if somebody else have abundance of faith in any other set of doctrines, surely you should suffer him to abide by that. You will discover, thus, that in the long run both he and yourself will arrive at the same goal. For haven't you read in the Mahimna-stava, "त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव"? (Thou art as the ocean to rivers falling into it).

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

RECENTLY we chanced to meet a few paragraphs from a book written by an American.* We quote from them below:

"The war is the failure of our machine for expressing our real selves. In each nation the machine it had paid the most attention to was its army—its machine for expressing itself when it was scared. The machine for expressing the courage of the people towards other people, the machines for expressing love and expectation, common service and common faith in human nature, were not ready. These latter ma-

chines, while they are infinitely more powerful and effective, had not been finished off for quick work. Without warning, a few military-minded men, so scared they had to fight, fooling with nervous fingers on the trigger of the world, touch it—and the world goes off.

"All the vast machines of hate go off.

"But it is not because men are beasts, but because our machines for being beasts work better on a sudden call than our machines for being men. Anybody interested in these machines should watch them now. It may be his last chance."

* "We," by Gerard Stanley Lee.

In another paragraph, the writer suggests the way to proceed for bringing about the desired change in the state of things :

“Entirely aside from the merits of the case, and the facts and the illusions involved, one thing stands out in this present war, to any fair-minded observer of human nature,—namely, it is not the men in the different nations that have got to be changed. We would have to take several thousand years to do that. It is the machines the men have for expressing themselves, which the men have had to fall back on. It is the clumsy and bygone machines with which the men are trying to express themselves. The machines can be changed in a few years.”

But unfortunately we cannot follow the writer much further on ; for when he argues that “world-peace is going to be brought to pass in all nations through industrial peace,” he just shunts off from the right track. Peace through industrial pursuits has already been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The pursuit of industry, left to itself to forge its machines, succeeds only in mechanising ultimately the ambition and covetousness of men for wealth and luxury, and world-peace proves as brittle as a glass pane before the metallic thrusts of covetousness.

But we value the writer's diagnosis, though not his remedy. And the diagnosis has been put before us in language at once crisp and complete. The war is nothing but “vast machines of hate” going off. But have men through ages of civilisation succeeded only in building and setting up these vast machines of hate? No ; “our machines for being beasts work better on a sudden call than our machines for being men.” Exactly so ; but why is it that of the machines we have lived so long to set up, one class is so handy and prompt in action while the other class remains comparatively inoperative? There must be something wrong in the way they

are made to work together as a whole ; and the real problem is to detect and rectify this mistake in method. The quoted author hits off again the right point to which our efforts should be directed. “It is not the men in the different nations that have got to be changed. We would have to take several thousand years to do that,” while “the machines can be changed in a few years.” So change the machines through which men live the exalted and intensified life of a nation,—the machines by which the jets and spouts of individual lives are all taken up and made to flow as the one rushing stream of national life. When once this mechanism of national life is set up, individuals find themselves surrendered as a rule to its operation. So if the machines remain in tact, it is no good trying to bring about a prompt change in their working by changing or modifying the individual men.

So the vital point where remedy is to be applied lies in the mechanism of collective life the West has built up with the feverish stir and stress of shining centuries. The machines have to be changed. The machines for being beasts must be subordinated to the machines for being men. But ask every nation in the West as to how its machines for being men work, and the same tale of inefficiency and exploitation will come as the reply to this enquiry. For the manhood of man should be the greatest unifying power, making for harmony through bonds of duty ; while the beast in man is always after a bone to pick, setting up the competition of rights. So when we find the history of nations determined more by this clashing of rights than by alliances of duty, we have naturally to conclude that their machines for being beasts dominate over their machines for being men. Now the problem is to reverse this domination,—to make the machines for being men prevail over those for being beasts. This process of inversion must begin with a few,

say two or three, powerful nations, and then it must be developed within and forced on others. The American President, Mr. Wilson, has been expressing sentiments that uphold this process,* but the season for mere sentiments is gone and the hour has struck for the actual re-adjusting of the machines of collective life.

These machines are all worked by the principle of right, and not by the principle of duty, individual and collective. That has been the initial mistake. But it is now too late to begin anew,—to pull them down and set up new ones again to be worked by the principle of duty. The wise law-givers in ancient India built up society and a mechanism of life on the fundamental definition of duties† leaving rights to be adjudged as corollaries only when violated. Modern law, on the other hand, defines only rights and leaves duties to be defined by the uncodified moral sense. But it is through our sense of duty that we assert the human in us, while through our sense of right we assert the brutal, namely, that which tends to set one against the other

instead of welding the many into one. So when the principle of duty legislates for us, it legislates for man as outgrowing the beast, but the principle of right can legislate only for man as cognate with the beast. The one accepts our crimes as individual failures, while the latter recognises crimes as part of our nature, and a method which presupposes any want of faith in human nature may very well lend itself some time to a legalizing of evils. Modern laws, oftener than not, have been seen of late to make of themselves such a travesty.

But if it be too late now to change the very foundation of laws that govern the machines of life in the West, we may just begin one step lower down with the machines themselves, readjusting them so as to make our sense of duty prevail even through our laws over our sense of right. Modern law admits that our rights always carry with them corresponding duties, and the machines of our collective life are calculated to carry into consummation both our collective rights and our collective duties. Now the working of

* An extract is given below from the speech of the President, delivered on May, 30, 1916, at Annapolis:—

“But what are the purposes of America? Do you not see that there is another significance in the fact that we are made up out of all the peoples of the world? The significance of that fact is that we are not going to devote our nationality to the same mistaken aggressive purposes that some other nationalities have been devoted to; that because we are made up, and consciously made up, out of all the great family of mankind, we are champions of the rights of mankind.

“We are not only ready to co-operate, but we are ready to fight against any aggression, whether from without or from within. But we must guard ourselves against the sort of aggression which would be unworthy of America. We are ready to fight for our rights when these are coincident with the rights of men and humanity.

“It was to set these rights up, to vindicate them, to offer a home to every man who believed in them, that America was created and her government set up. We have kept our doors open because we did not think we in conscience could close them against men who wanted to join their forces with ours, in vindicating the claim of mankind to liberty and justice.

“America does not want any additional territory. She does not want any selfish advantage over any other nation in the world, but she does wish every nation in the world to understand what she stands for and to respect what she stands for: and I cannot conceive of any man of any blood or origin failing to feel an enthusiasm for the things that America stands for, or failing to see that they are infinitely elevated above any purpose of aggression or selfish advantage.”

† i. e. *dharmas* or *swadharmas* as distinguished from rights or *swadhikaras*.

the whole machinery may be so regulated that the performance of our duties will proceed with the same infallible compulsion and dead certainty as the exercise of our rights. At present, this machinery works with this compulsion and certainty only in respect of our rights, our duties being compelled to follow suit by makeshifts of interpretation. In other words, it is our rights which force their own construction on our duties, while the best arrangement should be for our duties to put proper value and construction on our rights. It should be because of the good of all that we demand what is *due to* us or what is our right; so it is our duty, or that which is *due from* us, that should determine what is *due to* us or what is our right. This determination of right by duty should be the one principle underlying the whole operation of the machines of life; and for this purpose, the machines that primarily represent our dutifulness in life should exercise indubitable control over machines which primarily represent the creation and assertion of our rights.

Now let us classify the machines that we set up for working out the scheme of our collective life, or working out our nationalism in other words. We begin by evolving a department, an apparatus or machine, for each of the collective pursuits, physical, mental and spiritual. Of these, there are some pursuits by which we give to humanity what is due from us, and there are others by which we seek to receive from humanity what is due to us. In this give and take affair, the pursuits of wealth, of territory, of a good deal of learning that directly conduces to both,—in fact, all these pursuits which bring about expansion of our material power,—represent the egoistic or self-regarding aspect of our nationalism, the aspect of our rights; while such pursuits as those of thought sentiment and spirituality,—pursuits through which we contribute to the universal life of

humanity,—represent the altruistic or other-regarding aspect of our nationalism, the aspect of our duties. Our nationalism, therefore, is an organisation of these give and take functions, these functions of right and duty. Now in the present state of things, we have made it the business of politics to organise these functions of right and duty; and modern politics evidently means control exercised over all the interests of our nationalism pre-eminently by persons who represent its self-regarding aspect. It is really the representatives of our national rights and not of our national duties who run the whole business of national organisation, and here exactly lies the loose screw of the whole machinery,—the plague-spot in our collective life.

It really means the control of right over duty, the determination of duty by right. For we must not forget that every arrangement in our national life works like a machine, and if the flywheel in the machine which determines its speed and work is composed by a peculiar majority of men, then that peculiarity is bound to assert itself throughout the working of the whole machine. If men consecrate to the self-regarding interests of a nation constitute the working majority in that nation's supreme policies and executive machines, then it is inevitable that the other-regarding interests of that nation will suffer and go under. The only remedy is to make religion, or all that it stands for, the flywheel in the machine of government. It is in this central machine that our sense of duty must be made predominant over our sense of right, and religion is the only unfailing custodian, the only sustaining foundation, for our sense of duty. So it is the representatives of the spiritual interests of a country, the representatives of the altruistic aspect of its nationalism, that must be placed at the helm of the whole organisation of collective pursuits. They must be allowed to overhaul and re-adjust all the machines of our collective life

so that all the interests may be re-valued and the rights re-determined by the principle of our national duties towards humanity.

When nationalism is thus governed by what it owes to humanity as its duty and not by what it claims from humanity as its right, then only is there any hope for the nations of the earth to avoid wars waged over issues of political power. In a paper by Stopford A. Brooke, written in 1905, but published posthumously in the July *Hibbert Journal*, he insists that to put an end to war "there is one thing above all necessary—the uprooting of covetousness, national and personal—covetousness of wealth for itself, for the power it gives or for the luxury it brings, covetousness for what earth calls glory, and heaven degradation. That is the tap-root of all quarrels, schisms, divisions, wars in personal, social, national lives." The motive force of this covetousness, this grabbing for more rights swamping and deadening our sense of duty, must be eliminated from the vast machine of nationalism. Mere individuals like Stopford A. Brooke or like the American President would not convert an exception into a rule. The flywheel of the whole machine must be captured and it must be made to represent the highest spirituality in the nation as its moving, directing, governing force. The pulse of the whole machine must be spiritualised, and a spiritual nationalism must supplant the political nationalism of modern countries. Otherwise the Christianity

of Western nations is bound to remain what Dr. D. S. Cairns of Aberdeen characterises in the *Christian World* as a Christianity "so indefinite and fluid that it merges imperceptibly into every fashionable and majority wrong-doing of the day."

India has been pledged by her long course of history to evolve in modern times this spiritual type of nationalism. While other countries in the world cannot wholly break off from their past political traditions to make their nationalism typical in spiritual authority, purpose and organisation, for India that task represents not only the line of least resistance but the only course in which her life must be organised in order to save her from a death the shadows of which are already falling thick upon her from more than one direction. But, oh for one lucid interval in that spell of self-delusion closing in with the wings of a new-born political enthusiasm upon the nascent energies of the awakening leviathan of a new India! Oh for one gleam of self-recognition that will let in upon the soul of our leaders of thought and activity the inspiration of their own history, crowding out the promptings of a spurious nationalism that has already cast a fatal gloom over the mushroom histories of other nations. Oh, how long will the builders of our collective life in India barter away their past and their future for a mess of potage that this political nationalism is?

THE BRAHMO SAMAJ AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

THE *Indian Messenger's* serial on "The Influence of the Brahma Samaj" apporitions two articles to "the making of Vivekananda and the share of the Brahma Samaj in it."

The first article opens with the clinching

statement that "Vivekananda went from amongst the Brahmans to take up the Rama-krishna cry." Alas for all your Brahma influence on this turncoat, if it almost rolled down like water from the duck's back!

But then the second article explains—"But

being in his teens he (i. e. Vivekananda) could not be expected to know much of the inner life of the Samaj." A young man just skimming the surface of Brahma life and then flying off at a tangent to take up a superstitious cry that cuts the very soul of Brahmaism to the quick must be a sorry product indeed of Brahma influences! To contend that he was enriched by what Brahma Samaj gave him of its own and at the same breath to say that he was too young to receive from the Brahma Samaj what it could give him, is really a very hard nut of logic to crack, even for our friend the *Indian Messenger*!

But however damaging might be these conflicting contentions to the theory of Brahma influence on Swami Vivekananda advanced by our worthy contemporary, it may just have other props to hold it aloft. The apostasy of a Vivekananda from the Brahma Samaj may carry with it certain Brahma influences that may not be strong enough to withstand it but may be just strong enough to modify some of its features. The Brahma influence may not have determined the whole, but may have just suggested some of its parts; and in the first article we are introduced to some features in Swami Vivekananda's doctrines in which this Brahma influence is traceable.

But to find the working of this Brahma influence betraying itself, the Promethean writer of the *Indian Messenger* steals a march on the inner recesses of Vivekananda's intellect. There he discovers that "his intellect, though keen, was tinged with emotion and subject to moods,"—perhaps like an atmosphere tinged with moisture and therefore subject to clouds. The critic in ambush keeps watch over these moods or clouds flying thick overhead, when, lo, one of them just rewards his patience, assuming a form unmistakably Brahmaistic! So here is material enough for his history of Brahma influences!

A quotation from one of Swami Vivekananda's published Bengali letters to his monastic brothers of the Belur Math is made and the purport of it as given by the *Indian Messenger* runs thus, "The Swami condemns here in unmeasured terms all attempts on the part of the disciples at multiplying one after another the ceremonial details of Rama-krishna worship and characterises them as nothing but imbecility. He advises them to throw away into the Ganges the paraphernalia of worship and set about worshipping Bhagavan Narayana in each and every man." "This shows," concludes the writer, "there was a residue of his early Brahma training left in his character which asserted itself at times."

Now the same writer admits, a little above, that "Vivekananda analysed will be found to be a man of consuming earnestness for self-sacrifice and social service." So intellectual moods with a man capable of such "consuming earnestness" cannot be characterised as mere whims or caprices. That the Swami was also a man of earnest intellect is a fact quite evident to everybody conversant with his thoughts and teachings as preserved through his lectures. Is it possible, therefore, for an earnest man of this type to allow his intellect to be constantly contradicting itself unblushingly in conflicting moods? If not, it would be then a gross misrepresentation of the man on our own part to detach one earnest mood of his mind from others of no less earnestness and then run away with it as a conclusive expression of his mind. If you don't care to study the whole man asserting his concrete inalienable individuality equally through all his moods, well, hands off,—you have no right to cut him up into confusing fragments to suit your own selfish purposes. If you care to pounce upon one passing phase of his mind as expressed in one of his many letters, you are duty-bound to devote your thought on other phases of the same mind revealed in thought

and conduct, for every sincere student should permit all these phases to explain one another before hurrying off with any of them to put his own interested construction on it. Otherwise how would you explain your Vivekananda condemning the multiplication of rituals in the worship of an image or a Guru at one time and at another going through the same rituals himself with all the earnestness he is capable of, or inaugurating with an inspiring enthusiasm the worship of "images" on the grounds of his own monastery? You cannot play fast and loose with facts. Either you must take the whole of them to build your theory on or you must keep off from theorising.

Swamiji always used to inveigh against an undue engrossment in the details of traditional Hindu worship, and at the same time he would be found to insist on the scriptural accuracy of such details as far as possible. He never set his face against scripture and true tradition in this matter, but he was never tired of pointing out what are mere non-essentials and externals as opposed to the essential principles in the spiritual progress of a man. So if in reference to the Hindu traditional forms of worship, we find him uttering condemnations and protests, we must understand him to be tackling only a question of emphasis and not any question of creed as in the case of the Brahmans. We find him hurling his invectives on what is wrong in emphasis, not on what is wrong in faith or creed. So there is a world of difference between his condemnation of any form of traditional Hindu worship and that of our Brahma friends. But a child, as we have hinted, watching the clouds, is not concerned with any deeper meteorological significance, but only with reading his concepts of a lion or a tiger and so on into their changing formations.

The fervent call of Swamiji ringing through many of his letters and utterances to lead the religious consciousness of his fellow-

countrymen away from the barren trivialities of formal worship towards more fruitful channels of active benevolence and self-sacrifice is neither an adaptation from any Brahma doctrine of social service nor the distant echo of any Christian doctrine of charity. To indicate one's nose, as the adage says, one does not reach it with his hand plunged back round the nape of his neck and his ears! To trace the source of anything Swamiji preached in his life we have first to go to that never-failing fountain of his inspiration which he owned in life as his spiritual Master. Swamiji has this important fact laid down in the body of the rules for his monastic organisation that none of his brother disciples of the Math testifies to having been instructed by his Master to install any image or the like for purposes of his spiritual development through formal worship, and that it is only as the noblest form of showing profound reverence that the worship of Sri Ramakrishna in the Math established by Swamiji is justified. It was, moreover, Sri Ramakrishna himself who trained up these disciples to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials in the practice of religion. Swamiji's attitude, therefore, towards the fruitless multiplication of the formalities of worship was a direct inheritance from his Master. And as regards the doctrine of *Seva* which Swamiji preached so eloquently throughout his life, both the spiritual and humane elements of it are direct products of Sri Ramakrishna's inspiration. "Why do you mix with your human fellow-beings and serve them, when spiritual communion with your God should claim every moment of your existence?"—this was the crucial question pressed on the mind of Sri Ramakrishna by a constant observer of his life among his disciples. Never content with the verdicts of mere intellect, Sri Ramakrishna took this important question along with him to the heights of his transcendental consciousness and came back thence with the reply—"Well, don't you see

it is the Narayana that I mix with and serve in these people who come to me?" And it was exactly in the very terms of this constant vision of Sri Ramakrishna that Swami Vivekananda preached his doctrine of *Seva* or service to man.

And concrete instances of how the poor and the helpless are to be served were much better furnished by the actual life of Sri Ramakrishna than by anything the Brahmo Samaj could impress young Narendra's mind with in the way of materialising its much talked-of ideal of social service. It was a well-known fact among his disciples how the Paramahansa, a mere "mediæval saint" according to the *Indian Messenger*, had the occasion at least in two cases to come in contact with distressed and helpless humanity of some mofussil villages and how he refused to move an inch from their midst until he could distribute relief on a considerable scale. Nothing the disciples could carry throughout their life as a better inspiration for their humane impulses of social service than this illuminating phase of Sri Ramakrishna's spirituality. And as to "notes of patriotism" in Swamiji's teachings, nowhere perhaps he gives a better interpretation of the type of patriotism he stood for in his life than in the following passage of a lecture delivered in Calcutta:

"Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reform, some through other lines. With us, religion is the only ground along which we can move. Englishmen can understand religion even through politics. Perhaps, the American can understand religion even through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand even politics when it is given through religion. Sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the rest are the variations in the national life-music. And that was in danger. It seemed that we were going to change this theme in our national life, that we were go-

ing to exchange the backbone of our existence, as it were, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a political backbone. And if we could have succeeded, the result would have been annihilation. But it was not to be. So this power became manifest. I do not care in what light you understand this great sage, it matters not how much respect you pay to him, but I challenge you face to face with the fact, that here is a manifestation of the most marvellous power that has been for several centuries in India, and it is your duty, as Hindus, to study this power, to find what has been done for the regeneration, for the good of India, and for the good of the whole human race through it."

Where would be Swamiji's fervent patriotism without Sri Ramakrishna? Himself the truest embodiment of Indian nationalism, it was his Master who inspired every note of Swamiji's patriotism. Truly does the writer of a sonnet to the Swami say that the true form of Indian nationalism—

"We strive in vain to chisel out in mind,
With strange ideals borrowed from the West,
That fail us day to day when put to test.
Reveal thy light, Oh! deathless Teacher kind,
To lead us from this groping blind and vain
Towards that image true of Mother Ind,
Thy Master's life unfolded to thy ken,—
That, free from modern worldliness unkind,
A nation rise with message bold, sublime,
Its country bears to mankind all through time."

What a sorry hodge-podge the *Indian Messenger* makes of Sri Ramakrishna's "mediævalism" and Swami Vivekananda's "notes of patriotism and social service"! Nowhere perhaps can be found a better instance of a silly ignorance of facts bolstered up as the oracle of irresponsible criticism. One of his peculiar apothegms Sri Ramakrishna constantly used in pointing out in every particular how our life and thought have to be modernised was: "The coins of the Nawabs' regime won't count in to-day's currency." An out-

landish style of speech and expression coupled with a ship-shape exterior of hybrid manners and costume does not make a truly modernised Indian. Real modernisation, even in India, should be a far deeper process in life and sentiment, in which the soul of our past fully re-asserts itself bodied forth in new forms of organising thought and activity. The Brahmo Samaj represented only the highly necessary stage of antithesis or reaction in this process of modernisation,—a stage where the soul of our past proceeds to suffer even self-negation for the sake of developing the power of throwing off its dead and rotten forms of self-expression. So it is idle to expect that this Brahmo Samaj would be able, for some time yet to come, to discriminate between what constitutes denying the past and what amounts merely to purging it of rotten forms of self-expression. But individuals though identified with the Brahmo Samaj in some early period of their life may very well outlive this want of discrimination, just as in the case of Swami Vivekananda; and it is quite natural that the Brahmo Samaj would recognise in some elements of their new thought-life the old terms of its own antithetical process while some other elements in the new synthesis would be hastily characterised by it as a relapse into that mediævalism against which the Samaj lives to protest. So the true interpretation of the life of a Vivekananda will never come from the Brahmo Samaj. It can only come from that fruition of the modernising process which found its embodiment in the synthetic life of Sri Ramakrishna, and we defy anybody to point out any factor in the life of Swamiji which does not presuppose the inspiration of his Master.

The second article of the *Indian Messenger* devoted to "the making of Vivekananda" is a towering example of how one would sometimes stretch a point too far to gratify one's self-pride. Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal and Swami Vivekananda were in their college

days fellow-students of the General Assembly's Institution, and a period of intellectual intercourse between these young students has been described by Dr. Seal himself in an article written for this journal in 1907. Even in that early age Dr. Seal was well-known for his extensive philosophical studies, and young Narendranath, inoculated with the feverish intellectualism of modern culture and therefore seeking for a time in philosophy the satisfaction of his profound yearning after Truth, repaired to his worthy philosophical acquaintance for direction and advice regarding a proper course of philosophical studies. This friendly help enabled Narendranath very soon to scale the dizzy heights of the modern rationalistic philosophy, of which the hollowness of pretensions to base the deeper truths of man's religion on the sole authority of man's reason has of late been completely exposed. So even the loftiest flights of rationalism, in which the essentially philosophical mind of Brajendra Nath revelled, cannot be expected to satisfy the innate realism or mysticism of Narendra's nature. This realism of a well-balanced mind, emblematic of a surpassing richness of life and personality, can never allow the authority of direct experience to be whittled away by mere intellectual triumphs and subtleties. So we can vividly understand at this distance of time how the young philosopher was taken aback at the failure of his philosophy to satisfy the inmost needs of Narendra's nature, needs which were naturally therefore misconstrued by him as arguing a want of intellectual sanity. But be that as it may, it is quite evident that in this period of his life, Swami Vivekananda received important philosophical nourishment from his fellow-student, the young Brajendra Nath Seal. But how does this fact justify the Brahmo Samaj in claiming any share in the making of Vivekananda? Did the Brahmo Samaj give Brajendranath all the philosophy of his college days? Did it instill into his mind his

characteristic doctrine of those days that "the principle of individuation was the principle of evil?" Unless the *Indian Messenger* can prove that Dr. B. N. Seal derived all the philosophy of his college days from his contact with the Brahma Samaj, it is ridiculous for it to claim that the Brahma Samaj of those days influenced Vivekananda's intellect through this philosophy. The fact is patent to any intelligent observer who has lived within the Brahma Samaj for a generation as to how far Dr. B. N. Seal and his views may be said to belong to the Brahma Samaj as a part of its common assets. So the less said about the Samaj influencing through him people who even now seek his intellectual help, the better. But the *Indian Messenger* is pledged to prove by hook or crook the influence of the Brahma Samaj on the life of Vivekananda, and so makes nothing of abolishing all the distance of time between "the young Aristotle" of Prof. Hastie and Dr. B. N. Seal, the proud acquisition of the Brahma Samaj.

And in the flustered glory of having placed the future Vivekananda under the tuition of this potential acquisition of the Brahma Samaj as a mere beginner and pupil in philosophy, the *Indian Messenger* looks big over its achievement and casts a doubting insinuation on the veracity of the biographers of Swami Vivekananda, who claim that before his intellectual intercourse with his fellow-student, B. N. Seal, Narendranath had some correspondence with Herbert Spencer on some points in his Agnostic philosophy and the latter as a result of it agreed to modify a certain portion of the presentation of his doctrines in accordance with his correspondent's suggestion. The event in itself is not, of course, extraordinary enough to justify the feigned pruriency displayed by the writer in the *Indian Messenger*. We do not make much of any author's agreeing to modify any statement in his book at the suggestion of one of his interested readers. Specially,

those who know how obliging and polite the great Agnostic thinker was in his private dealings, would hardly open their eyes wide at the turn the event took in this case. But the real sting of the above insinuation lies in the suppressed contention that Narendranath being quite a beginner in philosophical studies, could not be credited with philosophy enough to try conclusions with Spencerian Agnosticism. Leaving aside any question as to the philosophical capacity of Narendranath's mind, it may just serve to settle the doubt raised by the Brahma writer if we refer him to the testimony of Dr. B. N. Seal himself to the effect that Narendranath had already become acquainted with Spencerian philosophy when he came to enter, with his help, upon a further course of philosophical studies with a view to rebut the influence on his intellect of sceptical writers he had studied. So Dr. Seal's description of his friend "as a beginner" in philosophical studies should not be taken in a too literal sense. But if behind this obvious ground of doubt, the *Indian Messenger* cherishes the lurking belief that it is impossible for a Vivekananda to extort, in his college days, from a thinker like Herbert Spencer any admission of defect in his views, we may just feel no interest to begin by combating this belief. In fact, the style of argument and mood of sentiment displayed throughout the serial in the *Indian Messenger* are so much remote from that open-minded attitude proper to a useful discussion of facts or principles, that we feel we have been writing more for our readers just with a cue supplied by our contemporary than for the sake of taking up any gauntlet that the latter may be said to have flung on our way.



EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XCIX.

(Translated from Bengali.)

“All glory to God!”

Baranagore, Calcutta,
7th Aug. 1889.

Dear Sir,

It is more than a week since I received your letter, but being again attacked with fever at that time, I could not send a reply so long, for which please excuse. For an interval of a month and a half I kept well, but suffered again for the last ten days; now I am doing well. I have certain questions to put, and you, Sir, have a wide knowledge of Sanskrit; so please favour me highly with answers to the following:

1. Does any narrative occur about Satyâkâma, son of Jâbâl, and Jânasruti, anywhere else in the Vedas excepting the Upanishads?*

2. In most cases where Sankaracharya quotes *Smriti* in his commentary on the Vedanta-sutras, he cites the authority of the *Mahabharata*. But seeing that we find clear proofs about caste being based on qualification both in the Bhishma-parva of the Mahabharata and in the stories there of the *Ajagara* and of *Uma* and *Maheswara*, has he made any mention in his writings of this fact?

3. The doctrine of caste in Purusha-sukta of the Vedas does not make it hereditary,—so what are those instances in the Vedas where caste has been made a matter of hereditary transmission?

4. The Acharya could not adduce any proof from the Vedas to the effect that the

* The real import of this question lies in the fact that Sankaracharya in his commentary on the Vedanta-sutras, I—3—34, 35, 37, interprets the aphorisms to prove that Upanishadic wisdom was imparted to Janasruti and Satyakam, only because they were not Sudras, as borne out by actual texts. But as these texts are doubtful even after Sankaracharya's explanation, Swamiji wants to be referred to other Vedic texts where mention has been made of these persons.

Sudra should not study the Vedas. He only quotes “यज्ञेऽनवकलसः” † to maintain that when he is not entitled to perform *Yajnas*, he has neither any right to study the Upanishads and the like. But the same Acharya contends with reference to अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा, ‡ that the word अथ here does not mean “subsequent to the study of the Vedas,” because it is contrary to proof that the study of the Upanishad is not permissible without the previous study of the Vedic *mantras* and *brahmanas* and because there is no intrinsic sequence between the Vedic Karmakanda and Vedic Jnanakanda. It is evident, therefore, that one may attain to the knowledge of Brahman without having studied the ceremonial parts of the Vedas. So if there is no sequence between the sacrificial practices and Jnana, why does the Acharya contradict his own statement when it is a case of the Sudras by inserting the clause “by force of the same logic” §? Why should the Sudra not study the Upanishad?

† “The Sudra is not conceived of as a performer of Yajna or Vedic sacrifices.”—Taittiriya Samhita, VII—1—1—6.

‡ This is the first aphorism in the Vedanta-sutras of Vyasa. It means “Now then commences hence the enquiry about Brahman.” Much dispute hinges on the particle “atha” or “now then” in reference to the nature of sequence it implies. Acharya (teacher of men) Sankara holds that the study of Vedanta or the enquiry into Brahman presupposes only the acquisition of the four Vedantic virtues or disciplines and not the study or performance of the Vedic works.

§ Swamiji argues here that from what we find in his comments on the word “atha” or “now then” in the first aphorism of the Vedanta-sutras, it is clear that Sankaracharya does not make any previous study of the work-portion of the Vedas incumbent on one who aspires to the highest Vedantic wisdom through a study of the Upanishads. The Sudra may be debarred by a prohibition in Taittiriya Samhita, VII—1—1—6, from the practice of Vedic works, but how can the same logic, (as Sankaracharya contends in his commentary on V. S., I—3—34), apply to exclude him from the pursuit of Vedic wisdom, when we have the Acharya's own authority to maintain that there is no necessary sequence between Vedic works and Vedic wisdom.

I mail you, Sir, a book named "Imitation of Christ" written by a Christian Sannyasin. It is a wonderful book. One is astonished to find such renunciation, Vairagya and Dasya-bhakti having existed even among the Christians. Probably you may have read this book before; if not, it will give me the greatest pleasure if you kindly read it.

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

"THE STRING OF PEARLS."

THE VOICE OF THE WORLD'S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS.

I.

The creeds of the world are many, like the
songs the nations sing,
And some are old and hoary, and to them the
ivies cling
With tendrils of ancient fables and of super-
stitions strange,
Changing their form, but clinging while the
rolling centuries change;
Yet true are the words of Krishna, as the
wheel of the great God whirls,
*"I am in every religion, as the thread through
a string of pearls."*

II.

Prayer is the heart's emotion, whether lips be
silent or speak—
Prayer that the golden sunshine may fall on
the up-turned cheek,
Prayer that if ever cometh a thunder-bolt to
kill,
The eyes may gaze undaunted, and the light
of faith live still;
Prayer that is also worship, and thanks for all
earth's good—

Be it breathed direct to Allah, or through
symbols of stone and wood.

III.

What say the world's religions of "the string
through the pearls"—their God—
That HE dwelleth a Spirit Eternal, where no
creeping worm has trod;
He smiles in the blush of the flower, and the
sunbeams bright and warm,
And He frowns in the blackened heavens that
portend the bursting storm;
That in all the splendour of Nature we see
Him, yet grasp Him not,
A Father of all earth's children, yet a Spirit
who baffles thought.

IV.

And what say the world's religions of the
secret of Happiness?
They say that Love's grape-clusters yield Joy
in the world's wine-press;
That Love is the pass-word to heaven, and
the path to the valley of peace,
Where no blast of misfortune can enter, where
the anguish of trial shall cease;
That pride of race and colour, of wealth and
talent, is wrong,
And "Brotherhood, deep as the ocean," is the
theme of religion's song.

V.

Then let the Parsee worship his God through
the glory of fire;
Let the Hindu kneel to Brahmah till his last
ill thoughts expire;
Let disciples of Christ and Buddha, and
Islam's believers all,
Meet in their mosque and temple, cathedral
and humble hall—
Spite of their fables and follies, God says,
while the great globe whirls—
*"I am in every religion as the thread through
a string of pearls."*

BY HERBERT THOMAS.

BRAHMOPANISHAT.

ब्रह्मोपनिषत्

(Continued from page 174)

सूचनात्सूत्रमित्याहुः सूत्रं नाम परं पदम् ।
तत्सूत्रं विदितं येन स विप्रो वेदपारगः ॥

The Sutram (or thread) is so-called because of its having pierced through and started (the process of Becoming) (a). This Sutram verily constitutes the Supreme State. By whom this Sutram is known, he is the Vipra (sage), he has reached beyond the Vedas.

(a) सूचनात् etc.—The word Sutram is here being traced to its root *sūch*, which has both the sense of “piercing through” like a needle and of “starting” or “indicating” a fact. The term, therefore is quite appropriate as used of the material cause of creation.

तेन सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ।
तत्सूत्रं धारयेद्योगी योगवित्तत्त्वदर्शिवान् ॥

By It all this (universe) is transfixed, as a collection of gems is stringed together on a thread. The Yogi who is the knower of all Yogas and the seer of truth must put on this thread.

वहिः सूत्रं त्यजेद्विद्वान्योगमुत्तममास्थितः ।
ब्रह्मभावमयं सूत्रं धारयेद्यः सचेतनः ॥

Established in the state of highest Yoga, the wise one must put off the external thread. One who is really self-conscious must put on the thread constituted by awareness of Brahman.

धारणात्तस्य सूत्रस्य नोच्छिष्टो नाशुचिर्भवेत् ।
सूत्रमन्तर्गतं येषां ज्ञानयज्ञोपवीतिनाम् ॥

On account of bearing this Sutram or thread, they can neither become contaminated

nor unclean (a) those (namely) who have this thread existing within them,—those, with this sacrificial thread of knowledge.

(a) Contaminated or unclean.—The word *ūchchhishta* refers to the digestive processes which corrupt the body they build up with accretions, just as the food left on the plate already eaten from is considered contaminated. Besides this, the human body becomes unclean (*asuchi*) by contact with impure things or thoughts.

ते वै सूत्रविदो लोके ते च यज्ञोपवीतिनः ।

ज्ञानशिखिनो ज्ञाननिष्ठा ज्ञानयज्ञोपवीतिनः ॥

They among men (really) know the *sutram*, they (really) bear the sacrificial thread (on themselves), who are devoted to Jnana (the highest knowledge), who have this Jnana for their sacred hair-tuft, this Jnana for their sacred thread.

ज्ञानमेव परं तेषां पवित्रं ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

अग्नेरिव शिखा नान्या यस्य ज्ञानमयी शिखा ॥

स शिखीत्युच्यते विद्वानितरे केशधारिणः ॥३॥

For then Jnana is the greatest purifier,—Jnana, that is the best (a) as such. Those who have this Jnana for their tufted hair are as non-different from it as is fire from its flame (b). This wise one is (really) said to be a Shikhi (or bearer of the tufted hair), while others are mere growers of hair (on the head).

(a) The word *pavitra* means a purifying agent. In the scriptures we find the highest knowledge characterised as the greatest purifying agent, as in the Gita: न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

(b) The flame is also called *shikhā*. As the fire is one with its *shikhā*, so the *Jnanin* is one with his *shikhā* of Jnana. “The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself.”

(To be continued).

THE DACCA RAMKRISHNA MISSION.

THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE INDOOR HOSPITAL.

AT the invitation of the Ramkrishna Mission, Branch Centre, Dacca, His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Thomas David Baron Carmichael, of Skirling, G. C. I. E., K. C. M. G., the Governor of Bengal very kindly agreed to open the new Indoor Hospital of the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission in the "Sourindraprosad Ward," at 7-30 A. M. on Thursday, the 24th August, 1916.

A spacious *Samiana* was set up for the visitors and a durbar tent for His Excellency. The dais and the road leading to it were tastefully decorated with tubs with varieties of evergreens and plants, kindly lent for the occasion by the Government Arboricultural Department. The buildings and the auditorium were decorated with flags and hangings and everything presented a bright appearance.

About eight hundred people assembled on the occasion, and all the seats—both chairs and benches—were filled up. Many notables of the province were present, among whom the following names may be mentioned :

The Hon'ble Mr. P. C. Lyon, C. S. I., I. C. S., Member of Council; The Hon'ble Nawab Syed Shams-ul-Huda, M. A., B. L., Member of Council; Mr. W. R. Gourlay, I. C. S., Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor; Capt. W. P. O'Cock, 10th Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor; Mr. S. G. Hart, I. C. S., Magistrate and Collector, Dacca; Lieut-Col. E. A. R. Newman, I. M. S., Civil Surgeon, Dacca; Mr. Evan E. Biss, Principal, Training College, Dacca; Mr. T. T. Williams, M. A., Professor, Dacca College; Mr. D. M. C. Whitmore-Clarke, City Superintendent of Police, Dacca; Rev. P. Noble, Baptist Mission Church, Dacca; Nawabzada Khajeh Atikullah Saheb, Dilkusha Gardens, Dacca; Khajeh Muhammad Abdul Hafiz, Ashanmunzil, Dacca; Babu Jagadish Chandra Banerjee, Zemindar of Murapara, Dacca; Babu Dinesh Chandra Banerjee, Zemindar of Murapara, Dacca; Babu Brojendra Kumar Bose, Zemindar of Sri-

nagar, Dacca; Babu Fani Bhusan Banerjee, Zemindar of Joydevpur, Dacca; Babu Surendra Prosad Lahiri, Zemindar of Kalipur, Mymensingh; Babu Jogesh Chandra Das, Zemindar and Banker, Dacca; Babu Gokul Chandra Roy, Zemindar and Banker, Dacca; Babu Gour Netai Shah Sankhanidhi, Banker, Dacca; Babu Sachi Nandan Das, Banker, Dacca; Babu Jadab Chandra Bhattacharya, Sub-Judge, Dacca; Babu Bhabani Prosad Neogi, Deputy Magistrate, Dacca; Babu Upendra Nath Gupta, M. A., Professor, Jagannath College, Dacca; Rai Bahadur B. N. Das, M. A., B. Sc., Professor, Dacca College; Babu Surendra Nath Mukherjee, B. L., Pleader, Dacca; Babu Ananda Chandra Nandi, B. L., Pleader, Dacca; Babu Ashutosh Guha, B. E., Sub-Engineer, P. W. D., Dacca; Rai Saheb Devendra Kumar Roy, Superintendent, Dacca Normal School; Rai Saheb Mahendra Nath Dutta; Babu Dharendra Chandra Roy, Vice-Chairman, Dacca Municipality; Babu Sasanka Mohan Sen Gupta, Hon. Magistrate and Personal Assistant to the Nawab Bahadur, Dacca; Dr. Hem Chandra Sen, L. M. S.; Dr. Jogendra Chandra Majumdar, L. M. S.; Dr. Revati Mohan Dutt, L. M. S.; Babu Surendra Nath Bhattacharya, Inspector of Police, C. I. D.; Babu Ram Prosanna Bhattacharya, B. A., Contractor.

His Excellency arrived at the Mission House punctually at 7-30 A. M., and he was received by the President, the Office-bearers and the Members of the Local Committee of the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission, who were all introduced to His Excellency, who was then escorted to his seat on the dais.

His Excellency having taken his seat, Babu Chandra Nath Roy sang the inaugural song specially composed by him for the occasion.

Next, being called upon by the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, Babu Thakur Charan Mukherjee the Secretary of the Mission, read a Report of the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission, some salient points from which are given below :—

The Dacca Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission was started in the year 1899. Its work, from the start up to the year 1908, consisted in weekly services on Saturday evenings. Later in the year 1908, a *Seva* or social service department of the Mission was organised, which was thoroughly non-sectarian, and its membership was extended to all persons irrespective of caste or creed, who sympa-

thised with all or any of its objects. From 1908 to October, 1914, the *Seva* work was conducted more or less systematically according as the number of enthusiastic workers varied from time to time. A new epoch may be marked from the latter date in the history of Dacca Ramkrishna Mission, for it sought and effected a thorough re-organisation and the Governing Body of the Mission at Belur deputed an able organisor as Chief Supervisor of the Dacca Branch in October, 1914. Under his able lead and under that of his successor, the Dacca Mission made an unexpectedly rapid progress, which has been steadily maintained ever since.

The spirit of Educational work carried on by the Ramkrishna Mission is that Education in India must have its foothold secure on what history has transmitted to us as our ancient Indo-Aryan culture. The first step that the Ramkrishna Mission adopted towards the solution of the problem of education is to start primary schools under monastic control which would impart moral and religious instruction along with the general education to the masses. With this object in view, this institution has started a free school of Middle English standard for the boys of the poor and neglected classes, who, either from extreme poverty or social degeneration, have no means or scope to get education. Arrangements have been made to give moral instructions to the boys and resident workers of the Mission, who have volunteered their services for the purpose, from the teaching staff of the school. More than a hundred students have been admitted into the school up to date. The Mission has also opened a Library and a Reading Room attached therewith for the use of the public. The Library contains about fifteen hundred books and more than thirty magazines and newspapers are regularly received for the Reading Room. Besides, the Mission is helping 14 poor school and college students with monthly stipends to meet their educational expenses.

The spirit of the Charitable work done by the Ramkrishna Mission is to serve the sufferers as veritable manifestations of God. With this spirit in view, the workers of the institution gave relief from house to house wherever their services were requisitioned and supplied medical aid and whole-time nursing in cases like leprosy, small-pox,

cholera, typhoid, pneumonia, etc. The last Annual Report of the Dacca Mission shows 300 such cases attended to by our workers. The approximate number of cremation or burial of the dead performed by the Mission workers during the year is about 100. The institution is helping, about twenty helpless and poor families every month with doles of rice varying from half to one maund and also with money, according to circumstances. Besides these, miscellaneous kinds of Charitable works, such as, extinguishing fire, restoring lost children and women to their guardians during the *Melas*, and other works of like nature are done by the workers, and their number, as shown by the Annual Report, was 167. Ravaging epidemics of cholera, pox etc. break out almost every year during the change of seasons in different parts of the district and the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission had been always prompt in sending Relief parties to the afflicted areas. At Dighirpar, District Mymensingh, about 60 cases of cholera were attended to by our workers, at Tangi-Dattapara 39 cases, at Bajrayogini about 10 cases, and at Pubail 14 cases of cholera were taken up by Relief parties of the Mission. Several cases of small-pox were nursed by our workers during the Narayanganj Small-pox Relief Works. Parties of workers and pecuniary contributions were sent by the Dacca Mission to Contai, District Midnapur, during the great flood in 1913 and to Tipperah, Comilla, etc., during the last famine. Relief parties are every year sent to Langalbandh *Astami Snan Mela* by the Dacca Mission to start temporary hospitals and to help the pilgrims in every possible way. With the same object, Relief parties are organised every year during the Janmastami processions at Dacca. Besides these, an outdoor charitable dispensary has been started at the Mission house, where the average number of daily patients exceeds 25.

The present premises of the Mission, a plot of five *bighas* of land, has been acquired for the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission and Math at a cost of about eight thousand Rupees by Babus Ramesh Chandra Das and Jogesh Chandra Das, the renowned Zemindars and Bankers of Dacca, in loving memory of their grandfather the late Babu Ruplal Das. Babu Mohini Mohan Das, Zemindar and Banker, has erected a building for the quarters of the resident workers in the Mission at a cost of Rupees

two thousand. Babu Sarada Prosad Roy Chowdhury, Zemindar of Kashimpur, Dacca, has erected the "Sourindraprosad Ward" at a cost of six thousand Rupees in memory of his only beloved child the late Babu Sourindra Prosad Roy Chowdhury, and the Mission proposes to start an Indoor Hospital in this Building.

His Excellency then very kindly rose and gave the following reply to the Report read to him (His Excellency's reply has been printed under the Associated Press of India, in all the English daily papers on the 26 August 1916).

Gentlemen, the character of our meeting this morning has come upon me as a surprise. I had imagined that my visit would be of a purely informal nature and that I should not have to make a speech. I thank you for having gone to so much trouble in arranging for my reception and although speech-making is not a thing I most like, I am very glad to have an opportunity of acknowledging the good work done by many members of the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission and I am glad too to be associated with your work by performing the opening ceremony of the new "Sourindraprosad Ward."

The members of the Ramkrishna Mission are actuated by that spirit of helpfulness which is so much needed in this world, the spirit that makes men ask themselves the simple question—"Can I help," and which makes them say—"If I can, it is my duty to do so," the spirit which leads to social service without any distinction of caste and race or creed. The members of the Mission work in this spirit for the spiritual, intellectual and bodily good of their fellowmen. They hold religious services helping men to realise that personal relation of man to God which is the foundation of religious devotion. They conduct schools for the elementary education of the masses and they maintain this hospital for the relief of human suffering and their spirit of helpfulness carries them further. It takes them out into the highways and byways of life seeking to help the poor and the sick and the helpless. All honour to them in their work.

The land upon which the buildings are situated is, I am told, the gift of my two young friends, Romesh and Jogesh Chandra Das. To them and to Babu Mohini Mohan Roy the Mission has

reason to be grateful and now Babu Sarada Prosad Roy Chowdhury of Kasimpur (of whose generosity I was glad to hear much when I visited Sabhar two years ago) has given the Mission this Indoor Hospital, which I have just opened and which is to be named after his son the "Sourindraprosad Ward."

Next, at a call from the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor, Rai Bahadur B. N. Das, M. A., B. Sc. (Lond.), Professor, Dacca College, conveyed on behalf of the Mission a hearty vote of thanks to His Excellency for the trouble he took in making time to visit this institution in the midst of his varied engagements.

His Excellency and the respectable gentlemen present were then taken round the different parts of the Mission House, and they visited the Free School, Resident Workers' quarters, Temple, Library, etc.

His Excellency was then escorted to the "Sourindraprosad Ward," where he performed the opening ceremony of the Indoor Hospital and the Dispensary of the Mission. The Hospital at present contains 9 beds, but the number will be soon enhanced, and there is an Indoor as well as Outdoor Charitable Dispensary attached therewith, fitted up with both Allopathic and Homœopathic medicines, as well as surgical appliances. His Excellency opened with a silver key, bearing the emblem of the Mission, the door of the Hospital, closed with an electroplated padlock, and it was declared open. Both the padlock and the key were presented to His Excellency.

When His Excellency was sitting on the dais, a photograph was taken of the meeting. Now, when he stood on the staircase of the "Sourindraprosad Ward" along with some of the gentlemen and Mission members, another photograph was taken.

His Excellency was then conducted to his motor-car, where flower bouquets were presented to him, and he departed amid loud cheers.

That His Excellency, the Hon'ble Members of the Council, and other respectable gentlemen present, both European and Indian, were pleased and impressed with all they saw, was evidenced by the fact that everyone of them placed excellent remarks on the Visitors' Book of the Mission, which was sent to them afterwards.

FAMINE RELIEF WORK OF THE
RAMKRISHNA MISSION
BANKURA AND MIDNAPUR.

In our report of the 8th August last, we informed the public of the dearth of rain in some of our centres at Bankura viz. Sonamukhi, Koniamara and Khatra. But we are glad to announce that the recent downpours have eased the situation so much that the inhabitants even of the above places can now look forward to a good harvest in the near future. With this bright prospect and the small stock of Aus, Jonar, Jai and Bhutta crops they recently reaped the people can now, at least, think of the happy day of deliverance from subjection to the terrible famine.

On the other hand the condition of the people in the Garbetta Sub-Division of Midnapur is indescribably miserable. Firstly, they have reaped little for the last three years for want of rain. Secondly, they have failed to plant the Aus crop for the selfsame reason this year also, and only lately have begun the transplantation of Aman crop with the help of the recent rains. So a good harvest is not expected from so late a transplantation. Moreover, the men who are working on the fields are so famished and emaciated that one doubts any strength in them for that kind of work, let alone raising a good harvest out of their labour; and these men represent the well-fed and strongest of every village!

We have opened two centres there—one at Hoomgad, another at Amlasole on the 13th and 28th last respectively. We are making a canal from one of the local rivers at a cost of Rs. 500 to irrigate nearly 8,000 bighas of land. It will be completed soon and it is hoped that the canal will help in facilitating and improving cultivation.

Under these trying circumstances we appeal to our kind-hearted countrymen to help us in offering relief.

Below is given a brief table of weekly rice-distribution from 29th July to 26th August last.

BANKURA.					
Names of Centres		No. of Villages	No. of Recipients	Quantity of Rice	
				Mds.	Srs.
Sonamukhi	...	79	362	228	20
Bankura	...	56	515	117	0
Indpur	...	60	554	145	20
Koniamara	...	34	329	87	30
Birdra	...	31	414	108	30
Chaharabad	...	34	277	72	10
Khatra	...	38	289	81	0
Koalpara	...	14	233	58	17
MIDNAPUR.					
Hoomgad	...	18	235	11	30
Do. (next week)		24	193	12	0
Do.	...	44	321	18	0
Amlasole	...	30	326	17	30

Clothes are urgently needed in our Midnapur Centres.

Any help either in money or in cloth will be thankfully received at either of the two addresses and will be acknowledged:—

(1) Swami Brahmananda, President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, P. O., Dist. Howrah, (Bengal).

(2) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar P. O., Calcutta.

12/9/16
Saradananda,
Secy. R. K. Mission

THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD
RELIEF WORK, BENARES.

(AN APPEAL)

THE public are aware that considerable damage has been caused by the recent floods in several parts of the Benares District. To alleviate the sufferings of the people, the Ramkrishna Mission has, since the beginning of this month, been doing relief work in the most affected area in the District, viz. villages situated on either side of the Ganges from Mushkabad to Ballua. At first two boats were sent out with provisions for inspection and giving relief to those who were in urgent need of it. About 40 villages were inspected and not less than 215 families consisting of 631 members were given food for 3 days.

From the reports it was evident that the distress was acute in most of the villages, so the Mission decided to open a relief centre at Mushkabad, whence it would be possible to distribute relief (chiefly foodstuffs) to nearly all the affected villages on the western side of the Ganges. Another centre at Ballua for villages situated on the eastern side of the river, will be opened in a day or two.

To afford relief to no less than 40 villages for several months funds are needed. The Mission has already spent about Rs. 500 from its Provident Relief Fund. It now invites the kind co-operation of generous minded people in this work of *Seva* to which it is called even while already it has been carrying on a Famine Relief work in Bengal. We appeal to all who can imagine in what a pitiful state of desolation these homeless starving families are, to help us with funds and sincerely hope for a ready response. Any contribution however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (1) Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur P. O., Dist. Howrah, (2) The Hony. Asst. Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares City, which is a Branch Centre of the Mission. In case of the latter, please mention A/c Flood Relief Work.

Saradaananda,

Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission,

15th Sept. '16

Belur, Dist. Howrah.

HIS HOLINESS SWAMI BRAHMANANDAJI AT BANGALORE

(The *Karnataka*, Bangalore, August, 12, 1916).

THIS morning's train from Madras brought to Bangalore an adorable personage whose presence here will, we are sure, be a joy and an inspiration to all lovers of Vedanta. The revered person we refer to is His Holiness Swami Brahmanandaji, President of the Sri Ramkrishna Mission founded by the world-renowned Sri Swami Vivekananda. He has come with a few of his brother Sannyasins and Brahmacharins, who were all received on the Ry. platform by a large crowd of admirers and disciples among whom were Mr. K. L. Datta,

Dewan Bahadur Mr. J. S. Chakravarti, Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar and Mr. M. G. Varadachar. Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar, on behalf of those present, spoke the following words of welcome.

Most Revered Swamiji,

We have very great pleasure in welcoming you to Bangalore.

You came here seven years ago and opened a centre of the Ramkrishna Mission in Bangalore. Your stay then was all too short to benefit us fully. The Swamijis of your Order, headed by Swami Nirmalananda, whom you have been pleased to depute for work in our midst, have been a great blessing to us and they constantly keep alive before us the high ideals of the Vedanta and its realisation in this life. But however invaluable be their work in the spread of spirituality, we have all been most anxiously looking forward to your arrival here to make their work the success that it deserves to be and bear rich and abundant fruit. We know how near you are to the Lord and what blessings of unalloyed purity, wisdom and love you can confer by your mere wish on those who really seek Him. We ardently pray that you may spend some time here, and by your holy presence and guidance lift us up to a higher atmosphere of spiritual attainment and thus establish on a firmer basis your great work of making humanity realise its divine origin, nature and destiny. May the Lord Sri Ramakrishna's blessings be ever upon you in abundance!

At the command of the Swamiji, Mr. J. S. Chakravarti spoke a few words expressing the Swamiji's thanks. Several of the gentlemen present then garlanded the Swami and they were all taken to the Ramakrishna Mutt, Basavandgudi, where they are expected to stay for a few weeks.

Those interested in the spread of the great patriotic and humanitarian movement which Sri Swami Vivekananda initiated will, we feel sure, hasten to pay their respects to the Swamiji now in our midst, whom the late lamented Swami loved and respected so much, and seek his advice and guidance as to what each one could do to serve the great cause.